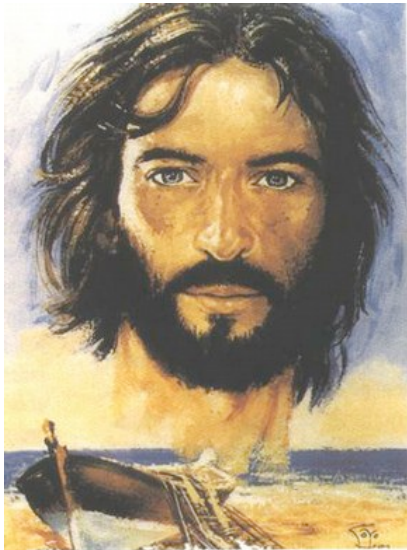


Nurturing Faith At Home

What?!? God is Calling My Child to a Vocation!

Yes, God has a unique and special plan for your child. As Christians, we believe this to be true. The following information can be shared and reinforced with your children as they mature into the persons God wants them to become.



Firstly, God calls each of us to holiness. He wants us to be saints. This is our universal call or *vocation*. However, one cannot become a saint without God's help and guidance. The strength and help we get from God to dedicate our lives to Him and follow Him closely is known as *grace*. We grow in holiness in many ways: through prayer and Sacred Scripture, and through participation in the sacraments and the activities of the Church.

While holiness is our universal vocation, we are also called to a personal vocation in a particular state of life. We can serve God as a married person, a single person, or a religious person such as a priest or nun. God has a purpose for each one of us, and He sets us apart for that vocation. All we have to do is cooperate with God's plan for each of us. This is not always easy to do, because the call from God is not always clear. In fact, it can be a mystery.

Marriage or religious life may be one's vocation, but God calls us to serve Him in a particular career or activity. How a person serves God and how a person lives their life so as to reflect God's love and goodness is called one's *mission*. In the bible, Jesus says, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28: 19). Everyone has the mission of leading others to Jesus in all that we do and say. And so, one can serve God as a teacher, a nurse, or a farmer. One can reflect God's love as a secretary, an engineer, a stay-home mom, or – in your child's case – a student.

How does God call us to a particular vocation and mission? This is a very personal call, and there are no set rules. The Lord wonderfully respects who we are, but He guides us to who we are to become. That means we must seek to know His plan for us, and then we must follow God's leading. In any case, God does not force us to answer His call. He respects our freedom and wants us to use our minds and hearts in trying to understand our vocation.

How do we know that God is calling us to a certain vocation or mission? Firstly, God gives us the talents and abilities we need, and He gives us an interest in that area of work. He also speaks to us in prayer. In the silence of our hearts or through words of scripture, God reminds us of the kind of work He calls us to do. As well, God sends us other people who recognize our gifts and abilities, and they encourage us in that direction. In any case, to hear God's call, we must listen, not just with our ears, but with our hearts. Then, the challenge is to be obedient to the call.

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CHRISTIAN VOCATIONS

- MARRIAGE
- RELIGIOUS LIFE
- PRIESTHOOD
- SINGLE LIFE

How can you, as a parent, help your child recognize God's call?

Here are some ideas:

- Discuss with your child his or her favorite and most successful subjects areas, hobbies, interests, and leisure-time pursuits. Relate them to potential jobs and careers.
- Talk with your child about their strengths and skills, talents and gifts; discuss how these can be used to serve others and to bring glory to God. God intends for these gifts to be shared.
- Share some of the decisions you have made regarding your education, work, and vocation.
- Discuss the importance of working for the benefit and service of others. Arrange for your child to be involved in volunteer work such as in hospitals, in nursing homes, and at church.
- Encourage your child to be involved in Church and parish activities.
- As a family, pray for vocations to religious life and for your children to discern the vocation to which God is calling them. Speak positively about religious vocations and encourage your child to be open to religious life, if that is where God is leading them.
- Listen attentively to your children as they share their aspirations and life experiences.
- Gently guide your child to live a good and holy life. Discuss, model, and instill Christian values and virtues with your children.
- Trust that the Holy Spirit will also guide your child.